

November 10, 2022

Ms. Kathy Dickhut, Deputy Commissioner  
Chicago Department of Planning & Development  
121 N. LaSalle Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60602



Re: NBW recommendations for We Will Chicago draft plan

Dear Deputy Commissioner Dickhut:

Thank you for meeting with us and the opportunity to provide recommendations for strengthening the We Will Chicago draft plan.

Our team did an extensive review of Pillar 3: Economic Development. Please find below our suggestions for building upon the ideas in this important section. In general, we would like to see the plan recognize small and industrial businesses as valuable stakeholders whose engagement is essential for growing Chicago's economy and supporting equitable development across the city.

- Add a Goal 6: Work with business leaders and neighborhood stakeholders to develop tools that balance the city's need for economic growth and high-quality jobs and manage environmental inequities and climate change. From our perspective, we see too frequently the opportunity to attract high-quality industrial jobs pitted against environmental concerns. At the same time, industry, such as advanced manufacturing, is becoming greener, making these issues more complicated than they are often portrayed. The We Will Chicago draft plan provides an excellent opportunity to balance these two important issues.
- Add a sentence that acknowledges the important role played by small and industrial businesses in fostering economic growth. Here is our suggestion: "The WWC plan recognizes that small and industrial businesses promote economic resiliency, advance sustainable economic development, and support equitable neighborhoods"
- Under Goal 2: Support business growth through Chicago, especially businesses owned by Black and Latino people, we recommend adding the following two objectives:
  - Include business leaders in developing strategies to support job growth
  - Identify barriers to business growth and develop tools to address them.
- Under Goal 3: Invest in equitable and inclusive workforce development to build resilient economic clusters, we recommend adding these two objectives:
  - Invest in on-the-job training and other workforce development programs (transitional jobs, social enterprise) to stimulate equitable job growth.
  - Coordinate workforce development programs with employers to connect training with available job opportunities.

- Under the Economic Development Pillar Goal 2 in WWC Goals, Objectives & Policy Ideas, we suggest adding “Implementing a new industrial policy that recognizes the importance of this sector in Chicago’s history and its future in a sustainable manner.” This is outside the scope of the WWC Plan, but it is an important part of the policy ideas.

Thank you for the continued opportunity to provide feedback, and please reach out with any questions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Simmons", with a stylized, flowing script.

Steve Simmons

Director of Business and Economic Development

